United Nations A/53/PV.103

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

103rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 29 June 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mra (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 113 *(continued)*

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/485/Add.5)

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Question of East Timor", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/240).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Ms. Shearouse (United States of America): My delegation enthusiastically welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) when it was founded last month. We commend all those

99-85498 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

who have brought us to this point, where a process of consultation is in place that will allow the East Timorese to determine their own future.

In May, we strongly endorsed the General Assembly's decision to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to $35 million for this new operation. Now, we have similarly endorsed this funding resolution, appropriating $52.5 million for this important Mission. My Government has pledged a voluntary contribution of $10 million.

As we stated in May, it is our expectation that the expenses for UNAMET can be met through voluntary contributions. However, we have supported this resolution, which recognizes that any outstanding balances will be assessed. We also expect that this Mission will be carried out with the strongest management controls and in full compliance with applicable regulations and rules.

We wish this Mission great success.

Ms. Incera (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I wish to reiterate the full and unreserved support of my delegation for the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and for the implementation of the popular consultation process in East Timor. We are extremely pleased to welcome the Tripartite Agreements and confident that the Mission will be successful.

Like the Secretary-General, we believe that this represents an historical opportunity to solve the problems of East Timor peacefully and should be seized in the most positive and determined way. However, my delegation also wishes to express its concern at the fact that the resolution we have just adopted fails to indicate that voluntary contributions must not be conditioned by donors. We believe that the Secretary-General should have enough flexibility in his use of the necessary resources in order to comply with the Mission's mandate.

We hope that this omission will not set a negative precedent in the future, because we consider such a provision to be necessary to guarantee the effective and independent functioning of the Organization, particularly with respect to a Mission that is expected to be financed mainly through voluntary contributions.

Furthermore, we note that the negotiating process that led to the adoption of this resolution showed a lack of will on the part of some delegations to consider the proposals made by other members. Unfortunately, the pressure, haste and lack of time in the brief debate favoured a rather inflexible spirit in our negotiations. We trust that this situation will be addressed in depth in the Fifth Committee with a view to creating a positive spirit and opening the way to the important negotiations to take place at the coming session.

Ms. Buergo Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The political support of my delegation for the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was the basic reason why we accepted the adoption of this resolution without a vote, despite our serious reservations about the negotiating process that led to its adoption and about the text of paragraph 3.

As everyone knows, this is the sole Mission in the recent history of the United Nations to be financed almost exclusively from voluntary contributions, in spite of the collective commitment of the Member States to financing mandated activities, as recognized in Article 17 of the Charter. The reasons for this formula are well known. Nevertheless, we believe that this arrangement could set an extremely negative precedent that will basically hold hostage the developing countries and the Organization as a whole.

We feel that the text adopted is inadequate, since it does not recognize the need for voluntary contributions to be unrestricted and unconditional, thus allowing for the flexible use of resources and ensuring its full implementation in the terms foreseen.

In the context of negotiations, the delegation of Cuba proposed a paragraph recognizing that principle, without any intention of criticizing those States which are making contributions. Indeed, those States are clearly recognized in paragraph 5. Our proposal was not adopted due to the positions of several Member States that exploited the political sensitivity of this issue in order to avoid its inclusion. Given the importance we accord it, we will return to this matter in due time at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Furthermore, we wish to express my delegation's serious reservations with respect to the negotiating process. During the informal informals, one delegation, representing a group of Member States, referred critically to the decision-making process of the Fifth Committee adopted in resolution 41/213. We await with interest the proposals which that delegation may wish to make on that process, at which time we will also put forward a set of proposals that we believe will facilitate negotiations.

Mr. Armitage (Australia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Canada, New Zealand and Australia in explanation of vote.

Our delegations welcome the adoption today of the resolution securing the financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). It establishes a reliable source of funding to ensure that this important activity receives the resources it needs to meet a demanding timetable for the holding of consultations.

Our delegations are strongly committed to supporting the 5 May Agreements between Indonesia, Portugal and the United Nations. The establishment of UNAMET represented the crucial next steps towards a peaceful and orderly resolution of the East Timor issue. UNAMET's responsibility for organizing and conducting the popular consultation gives it a central place in helping the East Timorese people make an historic decision about their constitutional future.

Given the importance and sensitivity of this Mission, we believe that the Fifth Committee has a responsibility to remain focused on its own role in ensuring that the mission is provided with adequate resources to fulfil its mandate and not stray into broader issues. We were disappointed that, during the consultations preceding the adoption of this resolution, the Fifth Committee had some difficulty maintaining this focus. Once again, the attention of the Committee became diverted to concerns, however legitimate, which lay beyond the scope of the item under discussion. UNAMET is a unique mission in many respects, including its financing, and we do not consider it an appropriate basis from which to draw conclusions about policy issues relating to the financing of United Nations activities.

In closing, we would like to pay special tribute to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, the Permanent Representative of Armenia, who conducted the necessary consultations with great energy and professionalism. Ambassador Abelian was instrumental in ensuring that the Fifth Committee reached a timely and transparent decision on the matter.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 113.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.

United Nations A/53/PV.104

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

104th plenary meeting
Monday, 12 July 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mra (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/53/1020)

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/53/1020. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly in which he informs the Assembly that 31 Member States are in arrears of the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/53/1020?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, allocation of items and organization of work

Request for inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/53/238 and Add.1)

The Acting President: The Secretary-General has the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-third session of an additional item, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo".

Owing to the nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, could be waived?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

99-85594 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include an additional item in the agenda of the current session, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the General Assembly, also on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

Consideration of the reopening of agenda item 37 (Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development) to enable the General Assembly to consider the request contained in the letter from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/53/1015)

The Acting President: Members will recall that in its resolutions 50/161 and 51/202, the General Assembly decided, *inter alia*, to hold a special session in the year 2000 to review the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and to consider further initiatives. The Assembly also decided to establish a preparatory committee of the whole of the General Assembly.

The Preparatory Committee held its first substantive session from 17 to 28 May 1999 and will hold its second substantive session from 3 to 14 April 2000. In his letter, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee requests that the General Assembly authorize the Preparatory Committee to hold a resumed half-day session during the week beginning 12 July 1999, in order to enable the Preparatory Committee to formalize the consensus agreements that have been reached and to finish its work on time.

In order for the General Assembly to consider the request, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 37. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 37, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting on 15 September 1998, the Assembly decided that item 37 would be considered directly in plenary meeting. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to consider the item again directly in plenary meeting.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In order to enable the Assembly to consider expeditiously the request contained in document A/53/1015, I should like to propose that the Assembly proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 37.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 37 (*continued*)

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Letter from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/53/1015)

The Acting President: As mentioned earlier, in his letter contained in document A/53/1015, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, requests that the General Assembly authorize the Preparatory Committee to hold a resumed half-day session during the week beginning 12 July 1999 in order to enable the Preparatory Committee to formalize the consensus agreements that have been reached, and to finish its work on time.

In connection with the request, I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongjian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): The holding of a resumed half-day session of the Preparatory Committee of the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives would entail the provision of one additional meeting in 1999 with full interpretation and documentation services in six languages.

The understanding is that the meeting will be held during the week of 12 July 1999, the exact date to be determined in consultation with the substantive secretariat and subject to prior confirmation of availability of conference facilities and interpretation services by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services.

On this understanding, should the General Assembly approve the request, no additional conference servicing resources would be required.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives to hold a resumed half-day session during the week beginning 12 July 1999?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 37.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.